

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING
September 16, 2008
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chief Paul Tiernan, Lt. George Stanko, Pat Fogg, Rich Lapointe, Maureen Feeney-Roser, Rick Vitelli, Tom Sciulli, Dave Gula, Tom Parkins

Absent: Carol Houck

Guests: Paul Pomeroy (Council Member), City of Newark
Rick Armitage, University of Delaware
Jean White, Newark Resident

1. REQUEST TO REVERSE THE DIRECTION OF ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ON CHOATE STREET.

Chief Tiernan indicated this request was received from Mayor Vance Funk. The mayor indicated that he feels that by reversing the direction of one-way traffic it may help to relieve some traffic congestion on Main Street and that traffic leaving Klondike Kate's Restaurant would travel Choate Street instead of Main Street.

Rich Lapointe indicated that there is a resident on that street that he is almost certain would be against this request. He also indicated that both sides of the street put refuse out on only one side of the street, therefore if the direction of traffic is reversed the parking would need to be switched to the other side of the street and refuse would be placed on the opposite side for collection. Rich Lapointe suggested relocating the "Do Not Enter" sign that is facing the roadway to the telephone pole 20' back so that it is more visible to drivers. Rich Lapointe said that if drivers travel down Choate Street and make a u-turn toward Center Street to Main Street you still have the same issue with coming out to Main Street. He also said if you travel New Street toward Chapel Street it is very dangerous pulling out onto Chapel Street. Lt. Stanko said that many students walk Choate Street in the early morning hours and stated if the traffic direction were reversed, there would be a concern for pedestrian safety.

(Tom Sciulli left the meeting at this time.)

MOTION BY RICH LAPOINTE, SECONDED BY LT. GEORGE STANKO, TO MAINTAIN THE DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC ON CHOATE STREET.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

2. REQUEST FOR A CROSSWALK AT CORBIT AND W. MAIN STREETS.

Council Member Paul Pomeroy said residents have brought to his attention and he agrees that there needs to be a safe and defined means of crossing to narrow pedestrian traffic to one specified location. A majority of the pedestrian traffic is attributed to the English Language Institute. He indicated that between the stretch of Nottingham Road and W. Main Street there are no crosswalks.

Rich Lapointe mentioned a couple of years ago, there was a request for a crosswalk at Radcliffe Drive that was denied by DelDOT and feels that crosswalks lacking pedestrian signals are unsafe. Council Member Pomeroy said the Radcliffe Drive crosswalk request differs from this request as the posted speed limit of 35 mph slows down to 25 mph approaching Corbit Street.

Tom Parkins said that the crosswalk at Hillside Road is difficult to cross. Council Member Paul Pomeroy agreed and feels that is the reason pedestrians choose to cross at Corbit Street. Dave Gula said that he disagrees with DelDOT's reason that it provides a false sense of security, but rather alerting drivers of a specified point to look out for pedestrians. Tom Parkins said the crosswalk should be installed on the south side of the intersection instead of the north side. Dave Gula agreed.

Lt. Stanko said DelDOT stated the signal located at the intersection of Hillside Road and Cleveland Avenue can't be changed to a pedestrian only cycle. If this were done, it would add another 30 seconds to each direction, which in turn would add another two minutes to the full cycle.

Council Member Paul Pomeroy thanked the Traffic Committee for their consideration of this request.

MOTION BY DAVE GULA, SECONDED BY LT. STANKO, TO SEND A LETTER TO DELDOT TO REQUEST A CROSSWALK AT CORBIT & W. MAIN STREETS.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

3. REQUEST FOR A NO PARKING RESTRICTION IN FRONT OF 104 BRIAR LANE.

Council Member Paul Pomeroy asked for this request to be placed on hold.

4. DISCUSS CHANGING THE WEST ENTRANCE/EXIT IN NEWARK SHOPPING CENTER TO "ENTRANCE ONLY".

Chief Tiernan received this request from Charlie Emerson (Parks & Recreation Director).

Maureen Feeney-Roser indicated that the Pomeroy Trail is located just west of the western most entrance/exit. There is a concern for pedestrian safety as drivers exit the Newark Shopping Center drivers are looking to their left as pedestrians are walking from the right. Maureen Feeney-Roser said the shopping center was recently sold and has plans to redevelop the property. She said the property owners might be willing to eliminate this access, as the entrance/exit to the east is an adequate means of accessing the shopping center.

Rich Lapointe said that considering this is a safety concern, and by code the City Manager is responsible for entrance approvals, he may have the authority to remove this access entirely.

Jean White said she always uses this particular exit and has never had a problem, and indicated the reason is that the other exits are usually congested. Maureen Feeney-Roser mentioned the Pomeroy Trail crosswalk was just installed approximately one month ago. Rick Vitelli also said this is the exit he uses as well for the same reason and said that by eliminating this exit it will cause even more congestion at the other exits.

Tom Parkins suggested consolidating entrances/exits by closing the west entrance/exit of the Newark Shopping Center and tying in to the entrance next to Bike Line. Lt. Stanko said this entrance is private property therefore officers would not be able to cite drivers for using the "entrance only" as an exit.

Dave Gula said he was not involved in the project at the end when these issues were discussed. Rich Lapointe said now that the trail is complete the concern for pedestrian safety should be referred to DeIDOT.

MOTION BY PAT FOGG, SECONDED BY RICH LAPOINTE, TO SEND A LETTER TO DELDOT IN REFERENCE TO THIS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CONCERN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Rick Armitage from the University of Delaware said in 1998 DeIDOT studied the possibility of reconfiguring the intersection in front of the Deer Park in order to create two-way traffic on Elkton Road. The reason for reconfiguring the intersection would be to keep most of the traffic from heading into the main part of campus. In 1998, council agreed to not make any changes at that time. The University of Delaware still strongly feels that the large truck traffic from S. College Avenue and Elkton Road into the main area of campus is a major safety concern. The University of Delaware would again like to make the one block on Elkton Road two-way traffic. Rick Armitage said one of the citizens' biggest objections was one of DeIDOT's scenarios of creating two-way traffic on New London Road behind the homes.

This however was a preferred scenario for many citizens' as they thought it would solve the traffic problems, however the residents' on New London Road were opposed for the simple fact of elevated noise and the significant loss of parking spaces.

Rick Armitage presented the members with the University of Delaware "Campus Capacity and Assessment Review". Rick Armitage said that the University of Delaware at some point would like an entrance on the eastern side of campus located at Wyoming Road off of Chapel Street. Rick Armitage said the University of Delaware owns all but one small piece of property. The University of Delaware at some point may ask the City for the abandonment of the street.

Tom Parkins indicated the crosswalks located at Library Avenue in the vicinity of Newark High School are no longer visible. Rick Armitage said that within the past month they spoke with DelDOT and at that time DelDOT indicated a total of 16 to 17 crosswalks would be upgraded in the City. It was not confirmed whether this particular location was included in this figure. Tom Parkins suggested contacting DelDOT to make sure that this location is included.

Pat Fogg indicated that due to the road construction on Elkton Road and Christina Parkway large trucks heading east on Elkton Road toward the intersection of Elkton Road and Casho Mill Road were in the right lane of Elkton Road in order to make a u-turn to head west on Elkton Road and said this is very dangerous.

OLD BUSINESS:

Rich Lapointe inquired as to the status of the request for a "No Turn on Red" sign at the intersection of Casho Mill Road and Nottingham Road relating to the line of sight concern. Rich Lapointe indicated that it appears some trimming has been done at the intersection and wondered if this was DelDOT's correction to the line of sight issue. Chief Tiernan said we would follow-up regarding this request.

There being no further business, Chief Tiernan called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 7 TO 0.

Paul M. Tiernan, Chairman